

How to assess what's important

Why you should attend this workshop:

If you believe *Validity* is important, then your aim should be to make your exams as valid as possible. This workshop will present a coherent system for ensuring that exams assess what's important, everything that's important, and nothing but what's important – the essence of validity. We will discuss, with examples, how to avoid threats to validity. Although we will present it for the context of school exams, the approach is easily generalised for any other exams and tests.

Who this Workshop is for:

Anyone involved in any phase of assessment – from syllabus development, through question writing, to scoring students' responses – can benefit from understanding how they share in the responsibility for ensuring validity. No specific prior knowledge is required.

Overview:

The workshop will cover how to develop exam specifications, understanding skills and demands, and how to write good mark schemes and questions; there will be lots of examples of how *not* to do it too.

Preparation for the workshop:

All that's needed is that, before the workshop, participants should make sure they are familiar with one (or several) examinations from their experience; they should make sure they have copies of at least one exam paper and its associated mark scheme, and of the syllabus guidelines or specifications.

Schedule

Time	Session	Presenter
09.00	Coffee and registration	
09.30	Welcome & introduction Outline of the workshop	Alastair Pollitt
09.45	SESSION 1 The importance of importance: Developing and exam specification	Alastair Pollitt
11.00	Break	
11.30	SESSION 2 Item writing 1: Evidence and mark schemes	
13.00	Lunch	
14.00	SESSION 3 Item writing 2: Writing question	Alastair Pollitt
15.30	Break	
15.45	SESSION 4 Review: Checking construct representation Discussion	Ayesha Ahmed and Alastair Pollitt